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ABSTRACT

The concept of coaching can be operationalized to support the growth, change, and commitment of staff, families, and children participating in integrated preschool intervention programs. Coaching is a strategy for facilitating accomplishment; it is a process whereby a coach and a player work together with the intention of realizing a player's visions and goals. It is based on the assumption that accomplishments of an individual are directly correlated with an individual's perception of his or her ability to accomplish. This paper discusses: opportunities for coaching, establishing the coaching relationship, and the work of the coach. Six steps used by coaches to move the players from vision to accomplishment include: (1) listening to the problem, (2) offering alternative perspectives on the problem, (3) turning problems into projects, (4) designing a collaborative action plan, (5) coaching for accomplishment, and (6) completing the coaching relationship. Three scenarios illustrate use of the coaching approach. (JDD)

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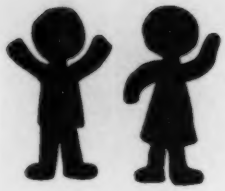

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COACHING FOR ACCOMPLISHMENT

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Project APIP

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PROJECT APIP

COACHING FOR ACCOMPLISHMENT

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INTRODUCTION

> "Coaching is not about memorizing techniques or devising a perfect game plan. It is about really paying attention to people - really believing in them, really caring about them, really involving them...To coach is largely to facilitate, which literally means "to make easy"--not less demanding, less interesting or less intense, but less discouraging..."
>
> Peters and Austin 1985, p. 326

Coaching is not a new concept. The coach has long been an indispensable member of athletic teams, not simply due to knowledge of the game, but for his ability to draw forth the best the players have to give. Educational and business management literature in the last decade has extensively discussed coaching as a structure to facilitate behavior change and goal attainment (Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development 1987; Peters and Austin 1985; Phi Delta Kappa 1989). In education, coaching has been used to develop technical skills, build collegial relationships and challenge individuals to realize their potential (Garmston 1987).

Over the past three years, the staff of the Alexandria Preschool Intervention Program (Project APIP) has explored how coaching can be operationalized to support the growth, change, and commitments of project participants, including staff, families, and children. Coaching, as practiced in Project APIP, is a strategy for facilitating accomplishment--a process whereby a coach and a player work together with the intention of realizing a player's visions and goals. It is based on the assumption that accomplishments of an individual are directly correlated with an individual's perception of her ability to accomplish. Individuals who perceive themselves as capable and action-oriented are often distinguishable in their ability to produce results from those who perceive themselves as lacking energy, fearful of failure, or unable to change. This paper will discuss and illustrate how coaching was used in Project APIP to support individuals in accomplishing their visions and goals. Aspects of coaching to be discussed include (1) opportunities for coaching, (2) establishing the coaching relationship, and (3) the work of the coach. Throughout the paper the individual being coached is referred to as the player.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR COACHING

People don't need a coach for every problem or challenge they face in life. Individuals may only need advice, new information, or a pat on the back. Yet sometimes individuals experience a recurring problem that seems unresolvable or they face a project that appears too challenging. They are stuck and can't break out of their patterns of thinking. Let's look for a moment at the example of Maureen's mom.

Scenario One: Maureen's Mom

It is Tuesday morning, February 14th, Valentine's Day, and Maureen's second day in her new school. Mom is nervous about what will happen on this day. A Valentine's Party is scheduled at school. How will Maureen adjust to the noise and confusion of this party. Maureen is a child with disabilities and her disabilities seem to make party situations particularly problematic. Mom remembers how Maureen has behaved in other party situations--she held her ears, cried, screamed, and ran away from other children and adults. Mom is fearful Maureen will never be successful in large groups because of her disability. She has concluded that Maureen's disturbing behaviors are a result of her disability and that because Maureen will always be disabled not much can be done to alter her inappropriate social responses. Mom wishes it were different. She wishes for a happy, confident little girl, but that wish has become very painful. Mom needs some support, hope, encouragement, and direction. What kind of help is available for mom?

The sympathetic ear--individuals in distress often look for a sympathetic ear--that is, someone to listen to their story, commiserate with them and take their mind off their bad luck. This understanding approach might make mom feel better for the moment, but it has minimal potential for helping her deal with her resignation about Maureen's future.

Advice seeking/information gathering--perhaps Mom can find facts to justify her daughter's behavior. This knowledge-based approach is informative, but it does not move mom in the direction she wants to go--that is, it does not help her experience her daughter as a happy, confident child.

Coaching--another alternative is coaching. In Project APIP, the dilemma of Maureen's mom clearly presents an opportunity for coaching. Coaching is different from sympathizing and advice giving. Coaching is a process whereby a coach and a player work together with the intention of realizing the player's visions and goals. It is the job of the coach to assist individuals in accomplishing something they don't feel they can accomplish on their own. In the above scenario, the coach's job is to help Maureen's mom begin to experience her daughter as happy and confident rather than difficult and disabled. The coach, an individual totally committed to the player's success, assists the player in designing actions that promote goal attainment.

Many people seem unaware of how powerful a coach can be in helping individuals accomplish extraordinary results--that is, results that would not occur in the natural course of events. Values in the American society often stigmatize a request for help or coaching as a sign of weakness or dependence. Yet top ranking performers, like athletes, politicians, and stage performers, hire coaches for the sole purpose of achieving extraordinary results. Similarly, in APIP the intention of coaching is to support individuals in accomplishing extraordinary results. Extraordinary results are relative to the individual and the situation.

Losing ten pounds and keeping it off is an extraordinary result for some people, while balancing a check book is extraordinary for others. The APIP staff advocates that opportunities for coaching and being coached exist whenever an individual desires to accomplish a goal that they perceive as too daunting, too risky, or unachieveable. The accomplishment of goals in the face of uncertainty is extraordinary.

ESTABLISHING A COACHING RELATIONSHIP

This section focuses on three steps in establishing the coaching relationship: (l) making a request for coaching, (2) selecting a coach, and (3) being coachable. The coaching relationship is a reciprocal arrangement between the coach and the player. In establishing the relationship the coach and player must work together. For example, it is the player's job to request coaching, but often the coach helps the player label and identify that request. Examples throughout this section will illustrate the interplay between the coach and player as they develop a coaching relationship.

l. Making a Request for Coaching

The player in a coaching relationship is the one who defines the game and directly experiences successes and failures in playing the game. The player must choose whether or not to have a coach. The player must in some way request coaching. It is impossible to begin an effective coaching relationship when there is no request from the player for coaching. For example, a dad's attempt to coach his son in baseball "power hitting" when his son is not interested in his dad's coaching or "power hitting" is likely to create a tense atmosphere. This is often what happens when a coach makes a unilateral decision to coach someone--that is, on his own a coach decides someone needs coaching. The player is more likely to be motivated and committed when the player sees the need and requests the coaching. In the baseball example, coaching might be requested by the player (son) in one of several ways:

A request from the player

Son: *Hey dad, could you help me with my batting?*

Coach prompts the player and player agrees to coaching

Dad: *Would you like some help with your batting, son?*
Son: *Sure...*

People do not typically attempt to resolve dilemmas in their lives by asking for coaching. Seldom does someone tell a friend a problem and then say, "I think I need some coaching." Requests for coaching are made in more subtle ways. A trained listener (coach) can hear a request for coaching in statements like "I need help," "I wish it were different,"

"I'm so discouraged," or "there's this big project and I haven't the slightest idea how to start." These statements indicate there is a vision or a goal that the speaker desires to accomplish, yet feels unable to accomplish. The expression of fear, disillusionment, or resignation serves as a signal to a trained listener that an individual may be asking for coaching.

2. Selecting a Coach

A common sequence of events when selecting a coach is: (l) a "coachable" problem is isolated, (2) the player requests coaching, (3) the player chooses a coach, (4) the coach agrees to the relationship. As mentioned before, players often do not realize the opportunity for coaching exists. Therefore when establishing a coaching relationship, the coach often prompts the player throughout the conversation. The following dialogue illustrates how the coach selection process might sound.

Mom:	*I'm such a lousy cook - no one in my family will eat my meals.* (problem)
Coach:	*Would you like to be a better cook?*
Mom:	*Yea...I'd like to be a great cook.* (desired outcome)
Coach:	*Would you be interested in being coached on becoming a great cook?* (prompt to request coaching)
Mom:	*Well, I guess that would be a good idea...* (request for coaching)
Coach:	*Who would you like to have coach you?* (prompt for selecting a coach)
Mom:	*I don't know...*
Coach:	*You might want to pick someone whose cooking you or your family admires, or pick a friend, or I would be willing to coach you.*
Mom:	*Would you really be my coach?* (selecting a coach)
Coach:	*I'd love to coach you on becoming a great cook.* (coach agrees to the relationship)

In this dialogue, the coach hears and clarifies the request for coaching, proceeds to assist the player in selecting a coach, and agrees to the coaching relationship.

When selecting a coach, interpersonal compatibility is important to consider. It is best when the player has a rapport and more ideally a trusting relationship with the coach.

The player-coach relationship is enhanced when the player views the coach as caring, compassionate and committed to the player's best interests (Rogers 1977; Peters and Austin 1985).

The player may want the coach to have specific technical skills (a tennis player would want a coach that is skilled in tennis), but that is not always necessary. Sometimes the desired outcome does not require technical expertise--like coaching someone to be on time for school. In other situations, the coach and player might find a third party who could supply the player with needed information or expertise. For example, in an employer-employee coaching relationship, the employer (coach) may suggest the employee seek training in a specific skill from a consultant. In this case the employer (coach) has used outside resources to support the player's goal. Although a coach does not necessarily need technical skills in a specific content area, it is important that the coach be skilled in "coaching." A discussion of coaching skills appear in the next section entitled "The Work of the Coach."

3. Being Coachable

In establishing a coaching relationship, the player must realize that her main job is to be coachable--that is to follow the coach's instructions. This might sound simple, but given a cultural inclination to be independent and self- sufficient, being coachable can be more difficult than it appears. Charles DuBois once said, "the important thing is this: to be able at any moment to sacrifice what we are for what we could become." In a coaching relationship, the player must surrender to the coaching process. The player by necessity must trust that the actions and requests of the coach are in alignment with the intentions of the player. Second guessing or sabotaging the coach does not produce extraordinary results.

THE WORK OF THE COACH

The coach's work is to support players in accomplishing their goals and visions. This section discusses six steps used by coaches in Project APIP to move the players from vision to accomplishment. These steps include: (l) listening to the problem, (2) offering alternative perspectives on the problem, (3) turning problems into projects, (4) designing a collaborative action plan, (5) coaching for accomplishment, and (6) completing the coaching relationship.

1. Listening to the Problem

In Project APIP, "coachable" projects are often drawn from problems expressed by staff, parents and children. The coach's job is to listen carefully to the speaker's problem and to grasp the problem from the speaker's point of view. Take a moment to "listen to" the problem in the following scenario.

Scenario 2: The Staff Dilemma

APIP staff members are talking for the "tenth time" about the presentation that they have been selected to give at a national early childhood conference. The conversation is full of anxiety and doubt about their ability to do a great job. Thoughts like "we've never done this before," "I'm sure people have heard most of what we have to say," and "if we are mediocre that's not too bad because there will probably be other mediocre presentations" predominated the conversation. The meeting ends on a note of resignation..."we have to do it and we can muddle through it."

Careful listening to the problems, stories and negative experiences of the speaker often gives a coach hints about the speaker's hidden desires--that is, what the speaker would really like to be or do but for some reason feels unable to proceed. For example, underneath the lethargy and resignation about the upcoming "mediocre" presentation is perhaps a longing to make a valuable contribution to the early childhood profession. Through careful listening, the coach is able to clarify the essence of the speaker's concern ("it sounds like you're afraid your speech will fall flat") and begin expanding the speaker's options and possibilities ("what other possibilities exist besides "falling flat?").

2. Offering Alternative Perspectives on the Problem

In this step, alternatives for perceiving or viewing the problem are explored. This is accomplished by helping the speaker distinguish between the facts of the problem and his interpretation of the facts, that is the speaker's feelings, emotions or conclusions about the facts. Facts are objective, measurable, observable occurrences. In scenario one, the fact is Maureen screams and cries at parties and in scenario two, the fact is the staff is giving a presentation at a national conference.

Interpretations are subjective conclusions drawn from the facts. Occurrences or events in life are interpreted differently depending on the observer's point of view. Some interpretations empower individuals, while others leave them discouraged, floundering, or defeated. Facts and interpretations are often intermingled when they are communicated through speaking and writing. In the sentence "I am a lousy speaker," the facts indicate the individual is a speaker and the interpretation "lousy" modifies the word speaker, thus giving the reader a sense that the two words (lousy and speaker) are connected. Using words like "because" and "therefore" also tend to create an association between fact and the speaker's interpretation. For example, in scenario one, Mom has concluded that the disruptive behaviors of her daughter--the observable facts--occur because Maureen is disabled. Furthermore, Mom has assumed that these behaviors are permanent because Maureen will always be disabled. These conclusions are not grounded in observable, measurable facts, rather they are current interpretations of the facts. As a first step, the coach would assist Maureen's mom in distinguishing the facts about Maureen from her interpretations about Maureen. Then, the coach would help her explore alternative interpretation of the facts by

engaging the speaker (mom) in a brainstorming session where alternative ways to view the problem can be invented. This process requires an atmosphere of suspended judgment. At this point the coach and player are not searching for one alternative interpretation, but rather inventing many ways, both reasonable and unreasonable, that the existing facts might be interpreted. The purpose of this step is to help the players see that there is more than one way to interpret a fact and that their interpretation is no more "true" than an alternate interpretation--they are simply different interpretations. Suggesting humorous interpretations of the facts can sometimes help players see the "significance" that they have attached to their existing interpretation. This step also allows the player to focus more clearly on the facts and begin to design plans of action based on the facts alone. Figure 1. offers alternative interpretations that might be substituted for the mom's current interpretation of Maureen's behavior.

FACTS	ALTERNATIVE INTERPRETATIONS
Maureen screams, cries, and runs away at noisy children's parties.	Her disability causes noisy, unpredictable situations to be confusing and there are strategies she can learn that will help her cope with her problem. Some aspects of her disruptive behavior are typical for a three year old. She cries and runs away because she hates cake and ice cream and wants to go home. She is looking for attention and does not know appropriate ways to get attention in party situations.

Figure 1. Alternative Interpretations to the Problem: Maureen's Mom

The following is another example of how a coach might help the speaker to distinguish facts from interpretation.

Scenario Three: Betty, Dylan's Mom

During APIP parent-teacher conferences, parents are invited to talk about their child's behavior at home - his strengths, interests, and problems. Dylan's mom, Betty, started talking about her son's lack of friends in the neighborhood. It seemed her neighbors were not welcoming Dylan into their homes...in fact, Betty felt they were intentionally excluding him. She, too, felt discriminated against in her neighborhood due to her foreign background and lack of American "ways." In the preschool environment, she had these same feelings of being different and not accepted by the other preschool parents and staff.

The facts indicated that Dylan had limited friends in the neighborhood and Mom had limited friends in the neighborhood and at school. The remainder of the conversation regarding intentional exclusion of her son or discrimination against her because of her foreign background was Betty's interpretation of the situation. To assist Betty in altering her perspective, alternative interpretations of the facts might be offered (Figure 2).

FACTS	ALTERNATIVE INTERPRETATIONS
Betty has limited friendships in school and in the neighborhood.	All the moms in the neighborhood work. The moms may be timid and uncertain about approaching her due to her "foreignness". Betty has had very few opportunities at school to network with other moms. Betty is accepted in her neighborhood but she feels rejected because she is accustomed to a different level of neighborhood "intimacy."

Figure 2. Alternative Interpretations to the Problem: Betty

Coaching at this stage helps the speaker to distinguish the facts, become clear on how the facts are presently being interpreted, and explore alternative interpretations which offer opportunities for growth and change. This can be a very difficult stage. The speaker may

not choose to explore new possibilities, may not be able to see other possibilities, or may not want to resolve the problem. If the speaker has no desire to explore alternative possibilities at this stage, the coaching relationship reaches a natural end because, as stated earlier, the speaker has to request coaching and be coachable. In these situations the coach may close the conversation by simply acknowledging the speaker's expressed feelings ("I'm sorry you feel that you and you son are left out"). For those interested in exploring new alternatives or possibilities, the coaching process proceeds.

3. Turning Problems into Projects

The player enters step three with the ability to distinguish facts from interpretation. In this stage, the coach again focuses the player on the facts and assists the player in identifying a goal or project worth "playing for." The coach, through inquiry, helps the player identify a goal or vision that calls the player into action ("yea, I'd like to get a standing ovation"). Questions like "given these facts, what would you like to have happen", "with regards to creating a powerful speech, what's next", or "what is missing for you when you think about friendships" help the player identify a specific desired outcome or project that is future-oriented. It is as if the player is designing how their life is to be rather than analyzing and trying to fix what is wrong with their present life. In scenario three, it is more empowering for Betty to identify or invent an accomplishment worth "playing for", such as a having a larger network of friends for herself and Dylan, than to figure out why she does not have many friends at this moment. By turning problems into projects, the player sees the problem in a new light--opportunities for action have replaced resignation.

Once a goal or a project has been articulated, it is important for the player and the coach to commit to the goal. The coach must be as committed to the player's success as the player. The commitment of the coach will be tested when the player gets discouraged and wants to forget about the goal. At that point the coach must recreate the goal for the player and reenergize the original commitment. Once coach and player commitment is established, the creation of a collaborative action plan that forwards the project from vision to accomplishment begins.

4. Designing a Collaborative Action Plan

"Given this is the desired result, what has to happen to move from here to there?"

"Given it is your intention to have friends in the neighborhood for yourself and Dylan, what kind of plan can ensure positive results?"

Given your commitment to make a powerful speech at the convention, what needs to be done between now and November 13th?"

The above questions exemplify the type of inquiry made by a coach to begin formulating a collaborative action plan. The planning process might begin by brainstorming

a large number of possibilities for action with judgments or choice of specific plan withheld until multiple options have been presented. In scenario three, "Dylan's Mom," a session of brainstorming possible action plans might generate ideas like:

- invite one parent and child over per week
- notice how many times you interpret a "not today" response of a parent as a rejection
- ask staff at school if you can work in class with another parent
- invite a child to play and chat with mom when she picks child up
- go to community pool and sit next to someone with young children or hang out in the baby pool

Once lists are made and options are selected, an action plan can be developed. To make the desired outcome a "real" goal, the action plan needs to be written down. This written record gives the plan an existence in time, space and actions. The plan should indicate as specifically as possible who will do what, when they will do it and where it will occur. Anticipated results--the goal--and completion date should be clearly stated.

5. Coaching for Accomplishment

With a desired outcome determined and a plan of action established, coaching now focuses on facilitating the player's active movement towards the goal. The coaching approach varies dramatically at this stage depending on the situation and the individual. In Project APIP, the interaction styles and coaching approaches vary among staff members, yet certain elements exist in all coaching situations.

Coaching maintains a positive approach--at all times, the coach is clearly on the same team as the player and has a positive relationship with the player. The coach creates and maintains a space where the players feel invited to express their visions and intentions. Communication between the coach and player provides information and feedback that supports the player in goal attainment.

Coaching keeps the player moving toward the goal--the coach provides direction to the player by keeping the player's commitment in existence. The mere fact that a coach exists helps keep the commitment alive. When the player sees or talks to the coach, the player automatically recalls the goal.

As individuals strive for accomplishment in an area where they have previously failed or in a new uncertain area, it is easy to become disillusioned and want to give up. Oft times plans don't work out--the first draft of the speech was a disaster or the neighbor called at the last minute and said she couldn't come over today. These occasions are experienced as breakdowns by the players and can impact negatively on their commitment. When breakdowns occur, the coach reestablishes the vision or desired outcome with the player thus providing direction for the player. The coach and player then look at the plan of action and

modify it to produce more satisfactory results. For example, if having people over to visit is not working for Dylan's mom, maybe she wants to try going to where people are, like school or the community playground. Either plan moves her in the direction of making new friends in the neighborhood. At this juncture, it is as important for the player to remain coachable as it is for the coach to remain committed. If the player reaches a point of being unavailable to the coaching process or the coach and player determine the relationship is not working, they can mutually agree to end the coaching relationship (see step six, completing the coaching relationship).

Coaching keeps the problem in perspective--the coach supports the player by listening to the player's concerns and providing the player with an enabling perspective. Players do become discouraged. In listening to the player's concerns, the coach works as a mediator, keeping the player in touch with what is actually happening--the observable facts--and offering alternative interpretations of an experience. As the player begins to see the experience in a new way, changes in thought and action begin to occur.

Coaching acknowledges efforts and progress--an important aspect of coaching is acknowledgement of the players for their efforts and progress. The coach is a constant source of encouragement. Acknowledgement of efforts and incremental accomplishments are essential elements of each and every coaching conversation.

As stated earlier, each individual is directed and supported differently in the coaching relationship. The scenarios in this paper have presented three coachable projects involving three different individuals and their coaches. To get a flavor of the diverse approaches that can be used in step 5, coaching for accomplishment, the following discusses the resolution of the three coaching scenarios.

Scenario One: Maureen's Mom

Turn problems into projects: The desired outcome of Maureen's mom was to experience her child as happy and confident rather than disabled and difficult. Mom was willing to talk to staff about her fears and distress. She was looking for help and hope.

Offer alternative perspectives on the problem: In working toward the goal of "my daughter is happy and confident" it was important for the mom to learn that being disabled didn't mean being difficult.

Design an action plan: Mom decided that observing Maureen in the school environment would be a good way to learn more about her daughter and ways to help her.

Coach for accomplishment: Mom watched and listened as staff searched for effective intervention strategies; she talked to staff about her concerns for Maureen's future; she worked in school and at home to bring some order and consistency in her daughter's life. Over time, the teachers and mom together discovered ways to modify some of Maureen's inappropriate behaviors. The positive, enjoyable aspects of Maureen were acknowledged and enjoyed. Opportunities arose throughout the year to measure Maureen's progress in party-like or novel situations. Mom saw her daughter's improvement and began to see possibilities for her child to be happy. Upon graduation from preschool, Maureen had improved in her ability to socially interact in appropriate ways, but more dramatically mom had grown to see Maureen as a child <u>with</u> disabilities rather than a <u>disabled child</u>. In a thank you note to staff she said "you've helped me see Maureen as a little girl, special and delightful and to handle the delays as a separate issue. Plainly you've shown me how to enjoy my daughter..." In this stage, primary coaching techniques included separating fact from interpretation, the presence of an unfaltering commitment on the part of staff and parent to accomplish the outcome, and support, encouragement and acknowledgement of incremental gains.

Scenario Two: The Speaking Dilemma

Turn problem into project: To be mediocre speakers or not was the question that plagued the APIP staff. For Mary, one of the staff members, the idea of public speaking was particularly fear inducing. To be able to deliver a speech that was valued by the audience was her desired outcome but certainly an unachieveable dream. The staff decided to hire a consultant to coach them on speech writing and delivery. The knowledgeable, self assured, polished manner of the consultant was the wrong approach for apprehensive Mary--the consultant was intimidating to Mary.

Request for coaching: She decided to request coaching from her colleagues.

Design an action plan: Her colleagues were to ensure she kept her commitment to make the presentation and provide her with clear, concise feedback in practice sessions as well as in presentations.

Coaching for accomplishment: Several opportunities were arranged for Mary to practice public speaking--once in front of a video camera, once for graduate interns and many times in the hotel room the night before the speech. Her first presentation was a tremendous success. Her accomplishment was acknowledged heartily in audience enthusiasm and evaluations as well as colleague feedback. After the second presentation, the interpretation "mediocre" could no longer be applied to Mary's speaking. For example, Mary now can "read the audience" and can be more spontaneous in her presentations. She is now confident that the information she presents is of value. Mary's breakthrough in public speaking occurred because she was willing to request specific coaching. The coaching brought her the feedback and the acknowledgement she needed to alter her experience of herself.

Scenario Three: Betty, Dylan's Mom

Turn problems into projects: As Betty, the mother of Dylan, experienced difficulties in the school environment, she often shared her problems and disappointments on an informal basis with Susan, an APIP staff member. During one particularly frustrating call, Susan and Betty decided to work together to help Betty feel more comfortable and secure with the staff, parents and school life.

Offer alternative perspectives on the problem: As the year progressed, Susan listened and responded to Betty's concerns, often offering alternative interpretations to the facts. This helped Betty substitute more empowering interpretations for her previously disparaging conclusions. For example, if Betty tried to arrange a playmate for Dylan after school and the parent of the other child said "no," Betty interpreted that to mean the parent didn't think Betty was trustworthy. Offering more realistic, empowering interpretation, such as the family does not speak English so doesn't understand the invitation or the mother of the visiting child was afraid her child could not handle the situation given the visiting child's disabilities, was essential in this coaching relationship.

Coach for Accomplishment: In coaching Betty, it became important to help her maintain positive thinking and acknowledge her efforts and successes. During a preschool yard sale (which Betty organized), Betty was telling Susan how discouraged she was about ever making friends at school. Susan, as her coach, simply pointed out that people at school must care about her--look at all the help she got for this yard sale. This was Betty's first insight that she might be able to work well with others. On a subsequent occasion when Betty was discouraged, Susan arranged to take her for coffee on a Sunday afternoon. This personal, out-of-school arrangement made Betty feel valued. Through her volunteering efforts at the preschool, Betty was able to see herself as a help to the staff and as an individual the children like to have around. As Dylan's preschool experience ended, Betty was experiencing herself as a valuable person, whether she was a mother, helper or friend. She perceived herself as part of a group. She left preschool excited about going to elementary school and felt she and Dylan were prepared for the next school experience. Helping Betty keep her eye on the goal and acknowledgement of incremental successes were important elements in this coaching effort.

6. Completing the Coaching Relationship

Project completion, that is when project goals or visions are accomplished, signals the completion of a coaching relationship. Celebrations occur, acknowledgements are given, and feelings of bonding and gratitude are often experienced between the coach and player. In looking at the examples in this paper, scenarios one and two represent experiences where projects were completed and the player's goals were attained--Maureen's mom grew to perceive her daughter as a happy, confident child and Mary was able to deliver a professionally valuable presentation.

Completion also can occur prior to project completion or goal attainment. In an action plan there are many step along the way to accomplishment. Each step offers the player opportunities for mini-accomplishment and to reevaluate the goal or direction. Oft times in the middle of a goal, the player's priorities or level of commitment will change. The players may then chose to terminate the project and declare it complete. Complete, when used in this way, suggests the players have satisfactorily resolved the issues at hand--that they are left comfortable with the choices and decisions that they have reached. Betty, in scenario three, is representative of this form of completion. Although her networking and friendship formations had not expanded as much as she had originally envisioned, her comfort with the school and increased contact with other moms left her feeling satisfied. When a coach sees that a project is not going to reach the anticipated goal, it is important for the coach to help the player satisfactorily resolve the issues that remain, hence complete the project and coaching relationship.

SUMMARY

Coaching is an outcome based, future oriented strategy for facilitating accomplishment. It is a process whereby a coach and a player work together with the intention of realizing the player's visions and goals. Opportunities for coaching exist whenever individuals desire to accomplish a goal, yet feel tenuous about accomplishing it on their own. In establishing a coaching relationship, the player has the responsibility of asking for coaching, selecting a coach and being coachable. The coach, through skillful inquiry, helps the player identify a goal or vision worth "playing for" and then together the coach and player create a project or plan for accomplishing the goal. The coach and player maintain active communication during the coaching relationship with the coach providing ongoing direction and support to the player. Completion of the project signals the completion of the coaching relationship. If the project is terminated prematurely, the coach assists the player in satisfactorily resolving any issues that remain.

In Project APIP, simply knowing that a coach was available when the tasks became too difficult proved to be supportive and thus empowering. The basic premises of coaching became embedded in the everyday communications occurring among staff and between staff and families. These were: help is not helpful if the player does not want it, problems can be turned into projects, and individuals should be supported in what they want to accomplish. In APIP, the knowledge that coaching was available to support players in accomplishing their goals and visions created an atmosphere that encouraged individuals to take risks and to grow and change.

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